The Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP)

Related National Environment Policy Act Documents

The Department of Energy (DOE) and other Federal agencies have prepared, or are currently preparing, other National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents that are potentially related to the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (GNEP PEIS). These documents, and their relationship to the GNEP PEIS, are discussed below.

Final Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada (DOE/EIS-0250) (hereafter, 2002 Yucca Mountain EIS)

The Nuclear Waste Policy Act (NWPA) requires the DOE to assess the potential environmental impacts from construction, operation, and closure of a Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC)-licensed geologic repository for disposal of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) and high-level radioactive waste (HLW). The analysis of potential environmental impacts in this EIS supported DOE's site recommendation to the President and the President's ultimate decision recommending to Congress that the Yucca Mountain site be developed as a geologic repository. The Final EIS was completed in February 2002.

The GNEP PEIS recognizes that the 2002 Yucca Mountain EIS has been completed, but will not speculate about the potential effects of GNEP on the Yucca Mountain repository. GNEP does not eliminate the need for the Yucca Mountain repository and proceeding with the repository as planned is necessary.

Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement for a Geologic Repository for the Disposal of Spent Nuclear Fuel and High-Level Radioactive Waste at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada (hereafter, Yucca Mountain Supplemental EIS)

It is anticipated that the Yucca Mountain Supplemental EIS will update the analysis of the environmental effects associated with the proposed action to construct, operate, and monitor, and eventually to close, a geologic repository for the disposal of 70,000 metric tons of heavy metal (MTHM) of SNF and HLW at Yucca Mountain. The Notice of Intent to prepare the Yucca Mountain Supplemental EIS was published on October 13, 2006. The Yucca Mountain Supplemental EIS is scheduled to be completed in 2008. DOE anticipates starting construction of the Yucca Mountain repository in 2011, with initial operations beginning in 2017.

The Yucca Mountain Supplemental EIS will recognize that the GNEP initiative has been proposed and that a GNEP PEIS is being prepared. However, neither document will speculate about the potential effects of GNEP on the Yucca Mountain repository. The Yucca Mountain Supplemental EIS will explain that the proposed action of constructing and operating a repository for 70,000 MTHM will not change at this time because of GNEP (that is, 63,000 MTHM of commercial SNF and 7,000 MTHM of DOE SNF and HLW would be disposed of at the Yucca Mountain repository without the use of any GNEP technologies). GNEP does not eliminate the need for the Yucca Mountain repository and proceeding with the repository as planned is necessary.

United States Department of Energy

The Global Nuclear Energy Partnership (GNEP)

Related National Environment Policy Act Documents

Supplemental Yucca Mountain Rail Corridor and Rail Alignment EIS

On April 8, 2004, the DOE announced its intent to prepare an EIS for the alignment, construction, and operation of a rail line for shipments of SNF, HLW, and other materials from a site near Caliente, Lincoln County, Nevada, to a geologic repository at Yucca Mountain, Nye County, Nevada. That EIS was expected to assess the construction and operation of a rail line to connect the repository site at Yucca Mountain to an existing rail line in the State of Nevada for the shipment of SNF and HLW, in the event that the NRC authorizes construction of the repository and receipt and possession of these materials at Yucca Mountain. On October 13, 2006, DOE announced an Amended Notice of Intent to expand the scope of that EIS to incorporate analysis of a new rail corridor alternative. This additional analysis will supplement the corridor analyses in the 2002 Yucca Mountain EIS. The expanded analysis will consider the potential environmental impacts of a newly proposed Mina rail corridor at the same level of corridor analysis as is contained in the 2002 Yucca Mountain EIS, and will review and update, as appropriate, the rail corridor analyses of that Final EIS. The expanded scope will then include a detailed analysis of alternative alignments within the Mina corridor at the same level of analysis of the ongoing alignment analysis for the Caliente corridor. The expanded EIS has been entitled the Supplemental Yucca Mountain Rail Corridor and Rail Alignment EIS.

The Supplemental Yucca Mountain Rail Corridor and Rail Alignment EIS will recognize that the GNEP initiative has been proposed and that a GNEP PEIS is being prepared. However, neither document will speculate about the potential effects of GNEP on the Yucca Mountain repository. GNEP does not eliminate the need for the Yucca Mountain repository, and proceeding with the repository as planned is necessary.

Commercial Nuclear Reactor NEPA Documents

All U.S. commercial nuclear reactor facilities must be licensed by the NRC prior to operating. In support of these license applications, the NRC requires the preparation of a NEPA document (usually an EIS) to support its licensing decision. As such, NEPA documents have been prepared for all U.S. commercial nuclear reactor facilities. Generally, these NEPA documents include an analysis of reactor operations and SNF management. Depending upon the specific reactor facility, this may or may not include an analysis of modular dry storage facilities.

If fully developed and implemented, GNEP would change the way in which SNF is managed at commercial nuclear reactor facilities. Instead of storing SNF on-site at the reactor facility until eventual disposal in a geologic repository, the SNF would be transported to a nuclear fuel recycling center that is unlikely to be located at the reactor site. The environmental impacts of such transportation are addressed in this GNEP PEIS. The environmental impacts of managing any SNF that would not be transported from the individual reactor facilities would be covered by existing NEPA analyses governing the operation of those reactor facilities.

United States Department of Energy

For further information contact:

Mr. Timothy A. Frazier at: GNEP PEIS Document Manager Office of Nuclear Energy, U.S. Department of Energy, 1000 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20585-0119, Telephone: 866-645-7803, Fax: 866-645-7807, or e-mail to GNEP-PEIS@nuclear.energy.gov